

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks in the RECORD on Senate Concurrent Resolution 15.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE NEGRO BASEBALL LEAGUES AND THEIR PLAYERS

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 162) recognizing the contributions of the Negro Baseball Leagues and their players, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 162

Whereas even though African Americans were excluded from playing in the major leagues of their time with their white counterparts, the desire of many African Americans to play baseball could not be repressed;

Whereas Major League Baseball did not fully integrate its leagues until July 1959;

Whereas African Americans began organizing their own professional baseball teams in 1885;

Whereas the skills and abilities of Negro League players eventually made Major League Baseball realize the need to integrate the sport;

Whereas six separate baseball leagues, known collectively as the "Negro Baseball Leagues", were organized by African Americans between 1920 and 1960;

Whereas the Negro Baseball Leagues included exceptionally talented players who played the game at its highest level;

Whereas on May 20, 1920, the Negro National League, the first successful Negro League, played its first game;

Whereas Andrew "Rube" Foster, on February 13, 1920, at the Paseo YMCA in Kansas City, Missouri, founded the Negro National League and also managed and played for the Chicago American Giants, and later was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame;

Whereas Leroy "Satchel" Paige, who began his long career in the Negro Leagues and did not make his Major League debut until the age of 42, is considered one of the greatest pitchers the game has ever seen, and during his long career thrilled millions of baseball fans with his skill and legendary showboating, and was later inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame;

Whereas Josh Gibson, who was the greatest slugger of the Negro Leagues, tragically died months before the integration of baseball, and was later inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame;

Whereas Jackie Robinson, whose career began with the Kansas City Monarchs of the Negro American League, became the first African American to play in the Major Leagues in April 1947, was named Major League Baseball Rookie of the Year in 1947, subsequently led the Brooklyn Dodgers to 6 National League pennants and a World Series championship, and was later inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame;

Whereas Larry Doby, whose career began with the Newark Eagles of the Negro Na-

tional League, became the first African American to play in the American League in July 1947, was an All-Star 9 times in the Negro Leagues and Major League Baseball, and was later inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame;

Whereas John Jordan "Buck" O'Neil was a player and manager of the Kansas City Monarchs of the Negro American League, became the first African American coach in the Major Leagues with the Chicago Cubs in 1962, served on the Veterans Committee of the National Baseball Hall of Fame, chaired the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum Board of Directors, and worked tirelessly to promote the history of the Negro Leagues;

Whereas the talents of such players as James Thomas "Cool Papa" Bell and Oscar Charleston earned them recognition in the Baseball Hall of Fame as well as the Sporting News List of Baseball's Greatest Players, but were all denied admission to the Major Leagues due to the color of their skin;

Whereas Minnie Miñoso played in the Negro Leagues for several years before being allowed to play in the Major League and was denied admission to the Hall of Fame, because during his prime years, he was a victim of racial discrimination;

Whereas Autozone Park in Memphis, Tennessee, has been designated to host on March 31, 2007, the inaugural Civil Rights Game between World Series champions, the St. Louis Cardinals and the Cleveland Indians in commemoration of the Civil Rights Movement; and

Whereas by achieving success on the baseball field, African American baseball players helped break down color barriers and integrate African Americans into all aspects of society in the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the teams and players of the Negro Baseball Leagues for their achievements, dedication, sacrifices, and contributions to both baseball and our Nation; and

(2) requests that the President issue a proclamation recognizing "Negro Leaguers Recognition Day".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) and the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, in 1872, Bud Fowler became the first African American to enter organized baseball. At the time, *Sporting Life* magazine called him "one of the best general players in the country. If he had had a white face," they said, "he would be playing with the best of them." There were only a handful of black players during that time.

By the end of the 1800s, the door to organized baseball was slammed shut to African Americans, and as a result, in 1920, Andrew "Rube" Foster managed a Negro baseball team and organized seven other team owners to join

him to form the Negro National Baseball League. Mr. Foster is known by many people to be the father of the Negro Baseball League.

For his efforts and contributions to baseball, he was inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York. Since 1920, many teams were formed to expand the Negro Baseball Leagues. He produced many extraordinary players like Satchel Paige, "Cool Papa" Bell, "Double-Duty" Radcliffe, "Groundhog" Thompson and many others.

Presently, there are 278 members of the National Baseball Hall of Fame, 18 whom had played in the Negro League. These greats include Willie Mays and Jackie Robinson, who first played in the Negro Leagues and then entered Major League Baseball.

Indeed, the players in the Negro Leagues were of such high caliber that many of them later moved to other major leagues and enjoyed better statistics playing there than they did in the Negro Leagues.

The opening of the doors of the major leagues to Negro League players often is attributed to Branch Rickey, who made a bold decision to sign Jackie Robinson to play for the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947. Unfortunately, many owners of Negro baseball teams could not compete in the recruitment and financial compensation for African American players, which later caused many African American teams to fold in the early 1960s.

Some people shake their heads and say that the Negro Leagues' players came along too early. I think "Cool Papa" Bell had it right when he said "they opened the door, just too late."

But then it is never too late to right what has been a wrong, to create equal opportunity and to open the doors for the Luke Easters, the Minnie Minos, the Kirby Picketts, the Barry Bonds, the Frank Thomases, and countless others who have thrilled and delighted us with their skills.

The achievement and success of African American baseball players on the baseball field have helped break down color barriers and integrate African Americans into all aspects of society.

□ 1515

This bill recognizes the teams and the players of the Negro Baseball Leagues for their achievements, their sacrifices, their dedication, and their contributions to baseball and the Nation. I commend the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) for introducing the bill, and I urge its swift passage.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 162, which honors the Negro Baseball League.

Those of us who love baseball relish the comparisons between players of different eras that our rich statistical records permit. Nobody who witnessed

Hank Aaron, a Negro League alum, break Babe Ruth's home record can deny the impact that feat had on the game and on society.

The shame of racism, which afflicts our country even today, prevents us from properly assessing the place in the game of Negro League players. We know that some of the greatest players ever to pick up a bat and ball toiled in those leagues. But who was better, Josh Gibson or Johnny Bench? Satchel Paige or Cy Young? Cool Papa Bell or Mickey Mantle? How would the Pittsburgh Crawfords, who had six Hall of Famers, stack up against the 1927 Yankees, the best team of baseball's all-white era?

Baseball today is one of America's most perfect meritocracies. If you can throw 92-mile-per-hour strikes or hit them consistently, there is a place in the game for you.

It wasn't until 1890, when team owners began to see the potential of their product, that black players began to disappear from white teams. And then it wasn't until the mid 1940s when Branch Rickey of the Dodgers decided he would rather beat the Yankees than honor the unspoken agreement to keep black players out of the game that black players returned.

Today we understand as a Nation that talent comes in all shapes, sizes, and colors. Baseball taught us that. Negro League players taught baseball that. For that, Mr. Speaker, we are eternally grateful.

I urge all my colleagues to join me in supporting H. Res. 162.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I ask that the Representative from Tennessee, Representative STEVE COHEN, have as much time as he might consume.

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 162, which recognizes the contributions of Negro Baseball Leagues.

The Negro Baseball Leagues are part of our history when segregation was the rule, segregation was the law. It is an unfortunate, most unfortunate part of America's history, part of a blemish on the soul of America, part of the blemish on the Constitution, on our laws, and the basis of the founding of the country.

No Nation has a more distinguished, honorable, and respected foundation conceived in life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and equal justice for all. But in so many institutions it wasn't true, it wasn't real, until about the 1960s. The work of a great Democratic Congress and President Johnson and others, Republicans as well in a bipartisan move, overcame and repealed Jim Crow laws and passed amendments and laws that allowed people to use public facilities and to have integration in this country and to give everybody the American Dream, which had been denied for over 200 years in this country.

The baseball leagues that were reserved for Negroes were an example of that. There were great players who didn't have the opportunity to perform and achieve until integration. Branch Rickey of the Dodgers brought Jackie Robinson up in the 1940s, and there were great players that didn't have that opportunity.

I want to tell you one story about one particular baseball player who is in this resolution. He is in this resolution because he deserves to be in any resolution about baseball, about discrimination, and about kindness, Minnie Minoso. Minnie Minoso was a Cuban, African Cuban, who came to this country. I guess he would be an African American.

Minnie Minoso started his career in the Negro League, and didn't get to the Major Leagues until he was about 28 or 29 years of age. He had a great career. He led the American League in triples and doubles and stolen bases, one time in RBIs, received three or four Golden Glove awards, named to the All-Star games many, many times, and had statistics with home runs and batting average at nearly .300 for his career that should have qualified him for the Hall of Fame. But he hasn't gotten into the Hall of Fame, and he is not going to get in the Hall of Fame because he wasn't allowed to start in Major League Baseball until he was 28 or 29 because of discrimination.

Well, in 1955, at a spring training game in Memphis, Tennessee, at Russwood Park, I went to a ball game in Memphis. I had had polio the previous year, and I attended the game with my White Sox cap and White Sox T-shirt, on crutches. A player came up to me and offered me a baseball; I was down by the railing trying to get them. The player was named Tom Poholsky, who was white. And I thanked him, but he told me, You shouldn't thank me. You should thank that player over there, number 9, Minoso. Minoso gave Poholsky the ball and wanted me to have it. But because of segregation in this country, Minnie Minoso, one of 60 players, they hadn't cut the rosters yet for spring training, was the only player who had the kindness in his heart to see somebody who was a ball fan who couldn't play at the time because he was on crutches. But in a segregated South, he couldn't give me that ball. He couldn't have a decent act of kindness because of segregation.

Well, I got the ball, and I went down with my dad and we got to know Minnie Minoso, and it started a friendship that has continued to this day. Minnie Minoso was a class act, a wonderful human being who goes beyond baseball, the most popular player ever to wear a White Sox uniform, and a person who has given his life to baseball. But because of the denial of segregation, not allowing him to play in the Major Leagues until he was 28 or 29, he will not get the respect he is due, just like other players in the Negro Leagues didn't. So many of them who were

great players, who would have led the majors in stolen bases, in doubles, in triples, in home runs, in RBIs, or average, as shown over the years by great players like Maury Wills and Bob Gibson and so many other great players who got the opportunity to play and show they could perform.

This year in Memphis on March 31, the major leagues are having a civil rights game. The last exhibition game of the season will be in Memphis at Auto Zone Park; it will be the Cleveland Indians and the St. Louis Cardinals play. There will be a special luncheon the day before the game where the widows of Roberto Clemente and Buck O'Neal will be honored, as well as Spike Lee, for contributions that baseball and civil rights have given to the growth of this country.

It is somewhat ironic in a way that we now see what baseball did to help integrate our country. And this resolution, which is part of the process of showing what this country has gone through, is about a time when we had segregation. Baseball helped integrate society. It helped get little young white kids to appreciate black players and see simple acts of kindness and see the absurdity of segregation. It gave me the opportunity in 1961 in Memphis to go to the Lorraine Hotel, then an all-Negro institution, and see a hero and other players like Walter Bond and Dick Powell staying in the segregated black hotel when the Caucasian players were at the Peabody, and see how ridiculous is this that my hero, an All-Star, a Golden Glove award winner, has to stay at the Lorraine Hotel which was not up to standards.

Baseball has come a long way. The Negro Leagues did a lot to give entertainment to Negroes and Caucasians who went to those games, and gave players an opportunity to play. And it is unfortunate they had to exist, but they did. They gave these players a great opportunity, from Josh Gibson, the great catcher, Satchel Paige, Buck O'Neal, and so many others who are enshrined in the Hall of Fame in Kansas City where there is a Negro League Baseball museum. But they also gave this country the opportunity to look at segregation for what it was, stupid, ignorant, retarded, and gave a process by which we overcame.

Sports have been a great vehicle to overcome discrimination and prejudice, and it was done in baseball, through heroic works by Branch Rickey, heroic at the time of Jackie Robinson who took all kinds of taunts. Now there is a Hall of Fame and there are players in there of both races, and you get there by talent. And that needs to happen all throughout this society and all throughout this country.

I was pleased to bring this resolution because of my experience with Minnie Minoso, my love of baseball, and the fact that baseball gave me an exposure to the horrors of segregation and what it did to my hero and a man who was kind to me through the years, Minnie

Minoso. But there were so many others. I went to games at Martin Stadium in Memphis, which is the home of the Memphis Red Sox, and it was all Negro players. They were great players. They didn't get an opportunity to show their skills. They later did.

I urge all my colleagues to support House Res. 162, recognizing the contributions of the Negro Baseball League, but at the same time reflect on how sad it was that there had to be a Negro Baseball League, and to reflect upon the need to make amends, not just to African Americans who were enslaved by this country's laws and limited and punished and enslaved by Jim Crow laws, but at the same time to think about the greatness of our country and mend a fault and a tear in our Constitution and our soul and civic justice, and put it together and apologize for slavery and Jim Crow, and make our country more whole and do the right thing. When you are wrong, you apologize. When you do evil, you do apologize, and you move forward. They are different bills, and I hate to mix them, but they are all part of the same story.

America needs to move forward, and progress has been made. We need to appreciate the past, but see where we were and move forward. And I am honored to be with the other sponsors of this bill, I think there are hundreds of them, and recognize the contributions of the Negro Baseball League and the story that baseball has played, and ask everybody in America to pay attention on March 31 to the final exhibition game of the season which will be televised on ESPN, a civil rights game that will highlight the civil rights heroes through sports, where Julian Bond will speak at a luncheon at the Peabody Hotel and tell a story of integration and success through sports that came too late in this country's history.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I now yield 2 minutes to my distinguished colleague from the State of Virginia (Mr. TOM DAVIS).

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I hadn't intended to come over and speak on this, but the gentleman from Tennessee's eloquence moved me to also add my support for this resolution. I supported it through the committee process. But to also recognize the contributions of the players, the Josh Gibsons, the Buck O'Neals who, because of the bars of segregation at the time, were never allowed to participate in what we now know as the Major Leagues.

But this resolution speaks to the fact that their contributions, that their activities and their records are also an important part of American history and of baseball history, and they should be remembered for their contributions. And that is what this resolution does. In their own ways, they are not only great players, great all-stars, great performers, and great athletes, but they also were pioneers. And I am proud to be here to support the gentleman's resolution.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 162, which recognizes the contributions of the Negro Baseball Leagues and their players for their achievements, dedications and sacrifices to baseball and the Nation.

African Americans began to play baseball in the late 1800s on military teams, college teams, and company teams. They eventually found their way to professional teams with white players. Moses Fleetwood Walker and Bud Fowler were among the first to participate. However, racism and "Jim Crow" laws would force them from these teams by 1900. Thus, black players formed their own units, "barnstorming" around the country to play anyone who would challenge them.

In 1920, an organized league structure was formed under the guidance of Andrew "Rube" Foster—a former player, manager, and owner for the Chicago American Giants. In a meeting held at the Paseo YMCA in Kansas City, MO, Foster and a few other Midwestern team owners joined to form the Negro National League. Soon, rival leagues formed in Eastern and Southern states, bringing the thrills and innovative play of black baseball to major urban centers and rural countryside in the U.S., Canada, and Latin America. The Leagues maintained a high level of professional skill and became centerpieces for economic development in many black communities.

In 1945, Major League Baseball's Brooklyn Dodgers recruited Jackie Robinson from the Kansas City Monarchs. Robinson now becomes the first African American in the modern era to play on a Major League roster. While this historic event was a key moment in baseball and civil rights history, it prompted the decline of the Negro Leagues. The best black players were now recruited for the Major Leagues, and black fans followed. The last Negro Leagues teams folded in the early 1960s, but their legacy lives on through the surviving players and the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum.

The Negro Leagues Baseball Museum is extremely significant because it represents many of the outstanding contributions that blacks made to the game of baseball notwithstanding their initial exclusion from the professional baseball league here in this country. The museum was designated America's National Negro Leagues Baseball Museum when the House passed a resolution. The museum, in the 18th and Vine Historic Jazz District, was founded in 1990 to commemorate an era when many of baseball's top players could not perform on the game's biggest stage, the major leagues, but instead made their own history. The museum draws about 60,000 visitors a year who can view evidence of the great contributions made to America's favorite pastime.

The legacy of the Negro Baseball Leagues also lives on through the multitude of great black and Latino players who have contributed greatly to the game of baseball. The contributions of the Negro Baseball League players certainly paved the way for baseball giants such as Jackie Robinson, Hank Aaron, Willie Mays, Roberto Clemente, and Barry Bonds. Hank Aaron is the Major League Baseball homerun record-holder because of the significant role the Negro Baseball Leagues played in the black community. The Negro Baseball

League is not only a great contribution to the black community but also to the Nation and the world.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 162 to recognize the contributions of the Negro Baseball Leagues and their players for their achievements, dedication and sacrifices to baseball and the Nation.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I too want to commend Mr. COHEN for his eloquence, for introducing this resolution; and I urge all Members to support the passage of H. Res. 162, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 162, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF A NATIONAL CHILDREN AND FAMILIES DAY

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 62), supporting the goals and ideals of a National Children and Families Day, in order to encourage adults in the United States to support and listen to children and to help children throughout the Nation achieve their hopes and dreams, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 62

Whereas research shows that spending time together as a family is critical to raising strong and resilient kids;

Whereas strong healthy families improve the quality of life and the development of children;

Whereas it is essential to celebrate and reflect upon the important role that all families play in the lives of children and their positive effect for the Nation's future;

Whereas the fourth Saturday of June is a day set aside to recognize the importance of children and families; and

Whereas the country's greatest natural resource is its children: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress supports the goals and ideals of a National Children and Families Day.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TOM DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

□ 1530

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, the most sacred institution of our society is that of the family. And within the family, its most precious asset, and that is its children. I stand before you today asking that my colleagues support me in